



Republic of North Macedonia

**Ministry of Information Society
and Administration**

**KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN ADVANCING THE DIGITAL AGENDA IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH
MACEDONIA**

The process of digital transformation is a long and arduous one and, as such, implies the need of many various endeavours to ensure streamlined transformation of the system and of society as a whole. Considering this fact, with a view to promote the “digital first” approach, but also to bridge the gap with the EU, the Government of North Macedonia, in coordination with the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, has made significant efforts to ensure compliance with legislative requirements, as well as strong and resilient digital infrastructure and open and safe cyber space. This annex discusses some of the efforts and activities taken in light of the digital transformation process.

Taking into account the immense importance of having an overarching policy document with respect to ICT, we have engaged in drafting a long-term National ICT Strategy, on the basis of a Roadmap that was developed in 2018. In the intervening time, implementation of existing strategies under the umbrella of the digital agenda is underway.

Delivery of high speed and very high speed broadband for all citizens in the country is high among our strategic national priorities. With that in mind, and in order to bridge the gap with EU connectivity and network standards, the Government of North Macedonia adopted the National Operational Broadband Plan (NOBP) for access to faster and better internet services, in line with EU standards. The national broadband targets set for North Macedonia estimate that by the end of 2023, at least 1 city will be covered with 5G signal, whereas by the end of 2027 all cities in the territory of North Macedonia will be covered by uninterrupted 5G signal. By the end of 2029, every citizen will have access to 5G internet with minimum speed of at least 100 Mbps. To achieve the national targets as set in the NOBP, the Government, supported by a TA financed by the WBIF and in collaboration with the World Bank, aims to considerably improve the state of the national Digital (broadband) Infrastructure by investing in construction of the National Transport Optical Network that will connect: white zones; justified grey zones; educational institutions (schools, universities, libraries, research centers, etc.), health institutions, ministries, courts, municipalities and other state administration authorities and bodies; and locations for free Wi-Fi internet access points. Beneficiary public institutions shall be connected to symmetrical access to the ultrafast broadband internet with speeds of at least 1Gbps.

In addition, regional agreements to significantly reduce roaming prices have been signed in 2019 with the Western Balkan 6 economies and with the Hellenic Republic.

It is of utmost importance that the digital transformation of North Macedonia is in line with European standards. Thus we initiated harmonization of the domestic legislation with the European Acquis. In that respect, in the first quarter of the year, the Law on Electronic



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Documents, Electronic Identification and Trust Services, transposing the eIDAS Directive, has been adopted. This law enables newly registered trust service providers in the country, which meet relevant EU requirements, to offer trust services regionally and on the global market. By providing mechanisms and services to increase the confidentiality in the electronic transactions, the law provides legal safety and encourages the use of electronic identification. In light of this, we have also begun transposition of the NIS Directive.

Another law beneficial for digital transformation in North Macedonia is the adopted Law on Electronic Services and Electronic Management. This law regulates the work of ministries, other state administration bodies, managing organizations and local self-governments, in the exchange of data and documents in electronic form, i.e. implementation of electronic services, where stipulated by law. This law, inter alia, regulates the issues related to the establishment and functioning of the National Portal for Electronic Services, the Catalogue of E-Services as well as the One Stop-Shops. The Law on Central Population Register was also adopted in the first quarter of 2019, following a transparent and inclusive consultative processes and consultations with the European Commission. This law regulates competence of the bodies, structure and contents of the Central Population Register, terms and conditions for use thereof, as well as the exchange of information between competent bodies and persons.

From a technical standpoint, our starting point was establishing base registers and enabling safe and reliable environment for standardized data exchange between institutions. To ensure that citizens and businesses receive fast and quality services, we are currently in the concluding phases of building a Catalogue of e-Services and a National Portal for Electronic Services. In the initial phase, the portal will offer the 50 most required services from several institutions online. Another such tool is the Registry of Administrative Services, which is also in the final phase of development and presents a central repository of all institutions, data, proofs and procedures related to administrative procedures. This tool enables us to maintain a standardized overview of the process flows and required documents/proofs for all administrative procedures.

In the pursuit of digital transformation, we also initiated and are now finalizing the National Population Register. This key enabler is one of the main cornerstones in the digitalization effort in North Macedonia. It represents a single integrated data register for all citizens, that aggregates data on the entire population, thus enabling the implementation and monitoring of public policies in a domain of population management and planning. It is key in establishing the national eID as well as in providing digital services to our citizens.



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Certainly, all of the building blocks enlisted above are regulated with common guidelines and standards defined under the National Interoperability Framework (NIF), based on the European Interoperability Framework 2.0.

Greater availability of services and opportunities via digital channels brings greater challenges, including security, cyber threats, sustainability and resilience of Government services and processes. Furthermore, on the doorstep of NATO and the European Union, North Macedonia is an increasingly attractive target for cyber-crime. Naturally, cyber security became one of the key priorities for the Government of North Macedonia. In that respect, in 2018, the Government adopted a National Cyber Security Strategy and Action Plan for the period 2018-2022. Various activities in the field of cyber security capacity building are being implemented. Consequently, North Macedonia is demonstrating high levels of commitment in all five pillars of the ITU Global Cybersecurity Index 2018. An essential element in addressing the regional cyber security challenges is human resources capacity building, which is the reason behind North Macedonia's efforts to initiate establishment of a Regional Cyber Security Training and Research Center.

With respect to increasing transparency and encouraging public-private partnerships, a national Open Data Portal was established in August 2018, promoting citizens' trust in the Macedonian Government. In the course of the past 9 months, over 40 institutions published more than 200 data sets, and this number is constantly increasing.

The digital industry is also taking a leap forward with the development of the Skopje Science and Technology Park. The Park was launched in February 2019, with an aim to stimulate innovation, entrepreneurship and economic growth and to serve as a major local hub for the ICT and IS start-up community in the region.

All enlisted activities and efforts are merely a portion of what is a broader set of commitments that would ensure a streamlined digital transformation process. The Ministry of Information Society and Administration and the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia continue to gear their efforts towards digital transformation that would provide a resilient, safe and open cyber space for all.